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RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 7190  
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 2751  
RUEHKF/AMCONSUL KARACHI PRIORITY 8842  
RUEHLH/AMCONSUL LAHORE PRIORITY 4752  
RUEHPW/AMCONSUL PESHAWAR PRIORITY 3441  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RUMICEA/USCENTCOM INTEL CEN MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ISLAMABAD 000549

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SUBJECT: PM ASIF ZARDARI?

REF: ISLAMABAD 505 ISLAMABAD 405

Classified By: Anne W. Patterson, for reasons 1.4 (b)(d)

1. (C) Summary. Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Co-Chairman Asif Zardari released his late wife Benazir Bhutto's will to the press to prove
2. (SBU) On February 5, the PPP released to the press a copy of Benazir Bhutto's handwritten will, in which she specifically hands her husband's local press picked up a Newsweek article in which Zardari declined to rule out an attempt to become Prime Minister. He is quoted as saying that
3. (C) At a meeting February 6, NSA Tariq Aziz told Ambassador it is a "given" that the PPP will form the next government. He said that
4. (C) Musharraf responded with a firm rejection of this idea. Aziz said it would reflect badly on Musharraf to have cut a deal to bring
5. (C) Aziz confirmed rumors that serious divisions are developing within the PPP. He reported that Zardari had summoned Amin Faheem back from
6. (C) Zardari's supporters have been quick to call us to insist the Newsweek story inaccurately portrayed the situation. PPP international
- Separately, Qureshi has been promoting himself as the best candidate, and CG Lahore reports (Septel) that infighting between Qureshi and Gill
- Legal Requirements
- ISLAMABAD 00000549 002 OF 002

7. (C) If Zardari were to pursue becoming Prime Minister, he has some hurdles to overcome. According to Pakistan's constitution, you must
- A controversial requirement that MNAs also have a university degree was added after Zardari served as a Senator. According to Zardari's bio,
8. (C) Zardari advised us (Ref B) that he was planning to ask his sister to resign from her Nawabshah National Assembly seat so that he could
9. (C) Comment: If he refuses to extend the NRO, Musharraf has leverage which could dissuade Zardari from seeking the job as Prime Minister
- According to the latest polls, Amin Faheem is head and shoulders above all other PM candidates in terms of popularity and has a separate power
10. (C) Frankly, none of these PM contenders strike us as being the strong leader that Pakistan needs. If PPP is in fact is tapped by Musharraf

PATTERSON